6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

enemies were encountered and continued until one or the other side weakened to the point where it sued for peace or fled. Men were not spared for capture. As victims fell warriors wielding stone knives detached scalps by cutting above the ears and along the brow. Then the hair was seized and the scalp torn free from the flesh. Decapitation was not practiced.[26] To sue for an armistice one side might raise a slab of wood on which were painted figures of animals and fish. Lasting peace was promised when an enemy surrendered or when all potential avengers were killed. However fear and mistrust often prevented both sides from immediately negotiating friendly relations on a verbal basis. When peace negotiations were conducted on the spot, the victors usually demanded a number of women by way of indemnity. Unwilling as the latter might be, they were always forced to go. At other times fighting lasted until the enemy had lost many men or had been completely routed. The victors then displayed an orgy of sadism and hate. The bodies of the dead received obscene treatment, a woman's legs being spread apart to expose her naked genitals. Necrophilia, however, was never practiced. Live children were spiked on sharp stakes set around a fire. Live men might be suspended from trees by the feet, a separate line securing each limb. A heavy pole would then be dropped into the crotch of the helpless victim. Neither side troubled to dispose of the dead. Ceremonial cannibalism also followed fighting, but instead of flesh only the raw "belly fat" was eaten. This ritual meal strengthened the victors and enabled them, should necessity demand, to eat raw meat in the future. Young men serving the expedition as porters did not join in the rite.[27] Instead of partaking in the cannibalistic meal a man could fast for four days, eating only a very little food and drinking small quantities of water. Women and children formed the bulk of the prisoners. Mostly the children were killed during the homeward journey, the custom being to strangle or knife one child at each camp made by the returning expedition. Each night a moiety took its turn in executing a child. In winter, for every youngster killed a marker of spruce brush was thrust into the ice at the center of some lake where the group happened to be camping. Still other young prisoners might be killed after the expedition had returned to camp. Women captives became wives who initially had to be carefully watched or tied lest they seek to escape.[28] If any men had been taken they were permitted to marry daughters of the captors. Upon begetting a child the man received his freedom. Exchange of prisoners was unknown. Following a battle every man who had shed enemy blood ritually tore his sleeve. "To kill a man puts human blood in the killer's sleeve," the informant explained metaphorically. Such blood now received the opportunity of flowing out. (A man performed the same rite when his brothers first killed game.[29]) The victors "did

[26] Heads were taken by the Tlingit and scalped as the expedition neared home "unless they had had time to do so on the spot." Scalping is specifically stated to have been done in such a way as to exclude the ears. Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 450.

[27] A similar custom is restricted to novices among the Kutchin with the intention of preventing "a sickness which inevitably follows a first killing, as well as general bad luck." Osgood, *Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin* (1936), 87.

[28] For the distribution of captive women within the community see below, p. 131.

[29] See below, p. 110.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard
Dease River

727 not think of another war," a statement which suggests that fighting brought about rather full release of suppressed anger and strain.[40]

727 783 On the return journey scouts were dispatched in advance to learn about conditions at the home camp. They reported back to the expedition. Nobody who had been left behind dared come forward to meet the warriors. To do so would have been an omen of misfortune. Upon returning to camp each man went directly to his own dwelling. Then the women prepared a steam bath for those men who had been wounded. This sudatory possessed especially strong properties because it included a specimen of every tree that the expedition had encountered on its homeward trip. Weekly for a month or so after the return the men danced with the combed enemy scalps on their heads. This helped them "to forget the fighting." Contact between a woman and a scalp had to be avoided lest the warrior lose his strength. Only the man who had detached the trophy wore it in ritual. At other times the scalp remained in a smoked-skin container. [304] A tattooed line crossing the upper arm just below the shoulder designated a man's participation in a war party. The number of such stripes revealed his war record.[41] While prestige did not constitute a primary motivation for fighting, a record of successful war participation enhanced a man's standing. For a year or two (?) the warrior received gifts of food, not to honor him but because hunting remained a dangerous occupation for a man who had killed human beings. If "game blood" became mixed with human blood that he had shed, it would make the man "heavy." It remains problematical whether such avoidances constituted disabilities for the man. More likely, it may be argued, refraining from hunting focused attention on the individual that rewarded him for his war effort. It may also be questioned whether a group living close to the level of subsistence could support even one nonproductive male per band for one or two years. [834] Warfare or, more specifically, contact with killing, rendered a man unfit for sexual intercourse. Hence a two-month avoidance of cohabitation followed his return. Violation of this taboo might mean the death of his children. The hunting and cohabitation avoidances reveal the antithesis felt to exist between enemy killing on the one hand and sex or hunting on the other. In this connection it may be significant that the contemporary Kaska unconsciously perceive coitus as akin to hunting.[42]

471 *Dease River Kaska.* Neither primary family nor microcosmic band exercised exclusive ownership rights over hunting or fishing sites. Generally, however, a band sought permission before moving into an area which another group was currently exploiting. Consent always followed, but the pattern nevertheless reveals a conception of usufruct probably coupled with an awareness that a given area could support only a limited number of persons.

681 The community dealt harshly with theft, behavior that made a man comparable to a dog. Depending on the gravity of his offense the punishment of a detected thief ranged

[40] This parallels Lantis' interpretation. Lantis, *Social Culture of the Nunivak Eskimo* (1946), 168.

[41] Among the Peel River Kutchin a line was tattooed from the corner of the eyes or mouth for each enemy killed. The Crow people, however, made their lines on the top of the bicep of the right arm. Osgood, *Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin* (1936), 87, 88.

[42] Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (1949), 255, 296.